

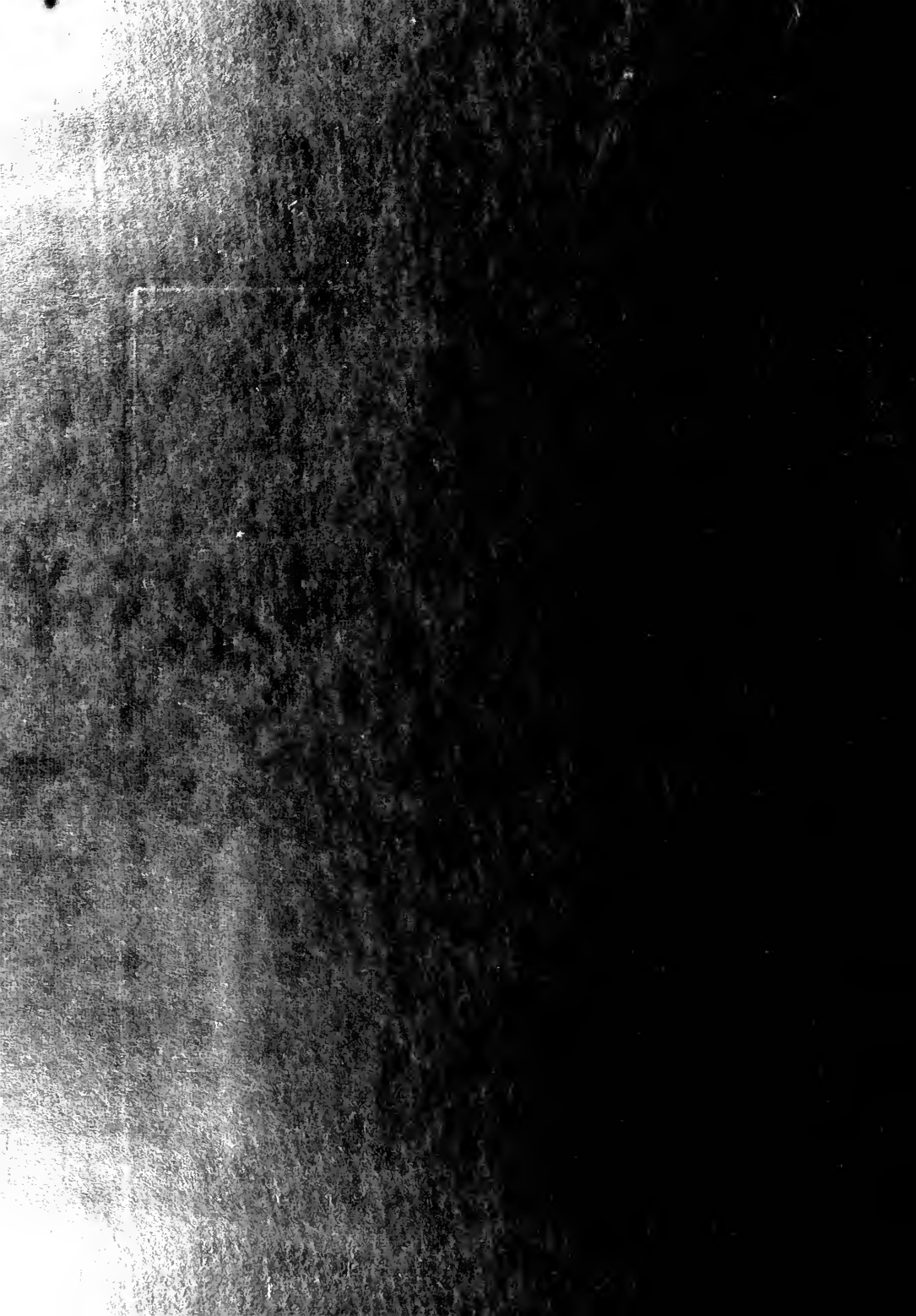
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Boston Redevelopment Authority

JUST A START PROGRAM

South End Urban Renewal Area

1966: Summer and Weekends

Summer Program for 1967

A cooperative effort to improve neighborhoods and housing in the South End by:

- Residents of the South End
- Boston Redevelopment Authority, South End Urban Renewal Area Office
- Volunteer groups of youths and adults from metropolitan churches, temples, and organizations
- South End Neighborhood Action Program
- City Departments of Public Works, Real Property, Office of Neighborhood Improvement, Parks & Recreation, and Housing Inspection

December, 1966

South End

365R  
J 1966



## JUST A START PROGRAM

The Boston Redevelopment Authority's Just A Start Program is a year-round orientation and work program in the South End Urban Renewal Area. The Program is organized by the Redevelopment Authority and involves resident adults and youth in the South End community, Redevelopment Authority staff, volunteer groups of adults and youths from suburban communities and other parts of Boston, the South End Neighborhood Action Program, and the City of Boston Departments of Housing Inspection, Public Works, Parks and Recreation and others.

Objectives    The objectives of the Just A Start Program are:

1. To facilitate communication between city and suburban youths and adults on ways to improve neighborhood facilities and housing.
2. To provide tangible evidence of improved housing in South End neighborhoods, of better playgrounds and recreational facilities, secured residential buildings and the improved appearance of block interiors.
3. To assist in low-cost rehabilitation and in building community interest in rehabilitation of housing.

### 1. 1966 JUST A START PROGRAM

The summer program, Just A Start II, involving thirty neighborhood improvement aides, began on June 26 and was completed on September 21, 1966. Administrative and supervisory staff and neighborhood aides from Boston were employed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Seven aides were provided through scholarships by Trinity Church in Copley Square, the Benevolent Fraternity of Unitarian Churches, the Hancock Church of Lexington, the Eliot Church of Newton, and the First Congregational Church of Wellesley Hills. The third group of neighborhood aides were volunteers from suburban communities. Facilities for room and board for the program were provided by a local foundation. Two M.I.T. dormitories were used as residence houses.



The major results of the Just A Start Program, summer of 1966, were:

1. Preliminary rehabilitation and housing improvement of nine houses owned by three-non-profit corporations, the Tuckerman, Low Cost, and Bishop's Housing Corporations, in the Greenwich-Sussex, Tremont, and Dwight-Shawmut neighborhoods. This work included clearing out debris in fire-gutted buildings, cleaning out and disinfecting vacant apartments, boarding up and securing buildings and apartments, caulking and painting doors and windows, and cleaning of yards and block interiors near these properties.
2. Boarding up and securing of many vacant buildings in the Greenwich-Sussex and Tremont neighborhoods and alley and block interior cleanup in these neighborhoods and in Greenwich Park, Chester Park and Bradford-Shawmut neighborhood blocks.
3. Playground program including the finishing of major construction and installation of equipment and a basketball court on the Camden-Lenox Adventure Playground and rehabilitation on older recreational facilities in one other neighborhood. As a result of the continuing involvement of the Protestant Youth Council of Arlington in the Just A Start playground construction on Lenox Street through the Spring, that Arlington organization provided a full-time director from London and volunteer youths as recreation aides for the playground. This staff, assisted by the South End Neighborhood Action Program and its recreation director, operated a full-time recreation program on the playground this summer. One opportunity leads to another. (See The Playground, Report on Construction of Camden-Lenox Adventure Playground).
4. A survey was made of parking needs and requirements for patients, visitors, professional and supportive staff of Boston City Hospital with interviews of a cross-section of people using the hospital facilities.
5. Rehabilitation assistance in clearing out and painting the South End Center for Homeless Men, and similar assistance in the Redevelopment Authority's South End Site Office facility.





## Orientation

At the start of and during the summer program, the entire staff participated in intensive orientations on the community's needs. A thorough orientation on programs and activities underway in the South End was held. This included walking through the blocks, reviews with the staff of agencies and organizations serving the community, and the daily work experience. Emphasis was placed on the opportunities to solve problems. Throughout the entire program, evening conferences for all the staff were held at the residence house with specialists in renewal, housing, community work, rehabilitation and citizen relations involved in direct discussions.

## II. 1966 JUST A START WEEKEND PROGRAMS

From April, 1965 to date, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, South End Office, has been operating Just A Start Programs on weekends throughout the year. Since September, 1966, at the close of this summer program, there have been 12 weekend and 7 week night community programs, a total of 19 such programs involving 35 different groups altogether (7 weekend programs had 2-5 groups each day). The work done by these has included playground construction, clearing out and securing vacant buildings, preparing houses and apartments for rehabilitation, painting and construction at the playground, painting at the Center for Transients, and interior block cleanups.

On all the playground and interior block programs, and in some of the housing improvement work, the residents of the South End neighborhoods have worked readily to improve the community. (See Attachment 1, list of organizations and groups involved on weekends during 1966.)

## III. JUST A START III, 1967

For the summer of 1967, the Just A Start Program will explore additional frontiers in communication, neighborhood improvement, and rehabilitation in the South End Urban Renewal Area. The key parts of Just A Start III will be:

Staff 40-50 Neighborhood Improvement Aides, including one-half from neighborhoods in Boston and one-half from suburban communities. Scholarships made available by churches, temples and other organizations will provide jobs for the suburban high school seniors and college age youth.

Administrative and supervisory staff for the program will be provided by the Boston Redevelopment Authority.



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BRA - JUST A START II

Spring  
Summer 1966  
Fall

Vacant land--  
people living nearby

Communication

Camden-Lenox  
Adventure  
Playground



- Programs
1. Clearing out of vacant buildings and yards and interior blocks and securing of vacant rehabilitation properties.
  2. Rehabilitation assistance (Level One and Level Three) to corporations providing decent and safe low-rent housing, and to residents with low and modest incomes.
  3. Interior block and neighborhood improvement programs, including the developing and constructing of playground and leisure-time recreation facilities.
  4. Communication and orientation--with resident youth and adults in various parts of the work programs, in neighborhood meetings in various parts of the South End, and in evening conferences with specialists in various urban programs.

Residence  
Facilities

Residence accommodations will be provided in a residential area contiguous to the South End Renewal Area.

Time Just A Start III, Summer, 1967, will begin on June 25, 1967, for an eight week period, ending on Saturday, August 18. The program will include weekend activities for the staff in various parts of the Boston area.

For further information, contact the following:

Boston Redevelopment Authority  
South End Urban Renewal Office  
Just A Start Program  
72 Warren Avenue  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116  
Telephone: 267-8425



## SUMMARY OF 1967 BOSTON SUMMER PROGRAMS

The 1967 Boston Summer Program was carried out from June to September in the Washington Park, South End, South Cove, Charlestown, Madison Park and Fenway areas. The objective was to support residential rehabilitation activities develop neighborhood improvements and promote community relations. The projects in the Summer Program were jointly sponsored by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and local community organizations in cooperation with public agencies.

The Summer Program was made up of Work Study Projects in Washington Park, and Good Housekeeping Projects in Washington Park, South End, Fenway and South Cove, Charlestown and Madison Park.

Some 306 high school and college students and summer staff were employed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority to carry out the projects. The majority of this interracial group of young people was from Boston. Most were residents of renewal areas, and included sons and daughters of relocated families. Others were from the suburbs; some were foreign students.

### The work results:

- Seventy-two buildings and garages and 48 apartments were painted and partially rehabilitated.
- A number of 312 loans and 115 grants were included in the rehabilitated buildings.
- More than 1,800 cubic yards of trash and debris were removed from 102 vacant lots.
- Twenty buildings were boarded up and secured.
- More than 1,200 cubic yards of abandoned furniture and junk were collected from many blocks.





- Twenty-one abandoned cars were removed.
- Thirteen play facilities were developed in renewal areas, and a section of Fenway Park was refurbished.
- Over \$44,000 was saved by homeowners in house-painting costs, and preliminary work saved thousands of dollars in normal commercial rehabilitation costs.

These were accomplished through cooperation with the Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department, School Department and similar agencies.

The story of the summer's work and events was told in 21 newspaper stories, four radio shows, including a Radio Station WEEI favorable editorial, and two television programs.

The cultural, recreational and entertainment programs involving summer participants included: evening tutorials, athletic activities, visits to museums, historical landmarks, music festivals, factories, police and fire departments, colleges and sporting events.

Local community co-sponsors included Freedom House, the Lower Roxbury Community Committee, John F. Kennedy Family Service Center, the Chinese Merchants Association, and the Fenway Civic Association.

An annual Roxbury Art Show, sponsored by the Negro Artists Association included the Art work of children who participated in the "Free Art Expression" Program, which was part of the Roxbury Work Study Program.

Several homeowners, inspired by the Summer Program, painted homes independently. The students' home visits with local residents, the cook-outs and parties for students by grateful homeowners (who also contributed financially) and the friendships developed, all testify to the community impact of the Boston Summer Programs and their aid in the Boston Redevelopment Authority's overall program.



Roxbury Work Study Project (RWSP)

Residential rehabilitation is the soul of the Washington Park Urban Renewal Program. The challenge in Washington Park has been to provide better homes for families of all income levels through a flexible and inventive rehabilitation program. The Roxbury Work Study Project has been one answer to this challenge. The Summer of 1967 marked the fourth year of its operation. Since its first year, the challenge has attracted an interracial stream of college and high school students from around the world, all over the United States -- and from Roxbury itself.

Cooperation of students and homeowners in a self-help program is the premise of the Roxbury Work Study Project. One result of the Roxbury Work Study Project is that rehabilitation takes on real significance for people as well as for their homes.

The accomplishments of the program are many. In four years, 162 houses have been painted and rehabilitated. In the nine-week program in 1967, the student workers painted over fifty homes, conducted tutorial and cultural programs, led recreational outings and formed lasting friendships with the residents of Washington Park.

One hundred and thirty college and high school students came from as far away as the Cameroons and as close as Roxbury. Fifteen workers were volunteers from the New England Federation of Temple Youth. Dormitory housing was provided free of charge through the courtesy of Northeastern University.

This year (1967), the RWSP is sponsored by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Freedom House, a private civic center in Roxbury.



Other work-study projects and similar summer programs were conducted this year for the first time in the Fenway, Madison Park, Charlestown and South Cove urban renewal areas of Boston, and the South End's Just-A-Start project continued for a third year.

#### Goodhousekeeping Project

When the 1967 Goodhousekeeping Project in Washington Park ended, 38 vacant lots had been cleaned up. Thirty-one Roxbury fourteen and fifteen year old teenagers spent nine weeks in the Summer sprucing up Washington Park areas-- cleaning out litter, cutting grass and loading dumpsters with debris.

Two lots were fenced in, two basketball courts and one tot lot were constructed, 21 abandoned cars were towed under contract and a major boulevard was maintained-- by sweeping the pavement and cutting the grass weekly.

The neighborhood got a big boost from GHP's Anti-Junk Campaign. The young workers helped homeowners by collecting items that would ordinarily cost money to be hauled away. In nine days, the teenagers collected enough refuse to fill 40 boxcars.

Other Goodhousekeeping Projects involving fourteen-and-fifteen-years olds were conducted in the Madison Park and Charlestown areas of the city.

The Washington Park Urban Renewal Area, a residential area that had a high percentage of sub-standard housing, was selected as the first urban renewal rehabilitation area in Boston. Encompassing 500 acres, it is in the Roxbury-North Dorchester General Neighborhood Renewal Plan area, Boston's primary reception center for in-migrant, low-income non-whites.

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Reference

Just a Start Program

South End

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